

FILE ONLY

Bush reportedly restored Noriega to CIA payroll

Washington Bureau of The Sun

WASHINGTON — Adm. Stansfield Turner, George Bush's successor as CIA director, said yesterday that Mr. Bush, as vice president, put Panamanian strong man Manuel Antonio Noriega back on the CIA payroll four years after Admiral Turner removed him, United Press International reported yesterday.

Admiral Turner's charge, aired on two television networks last night, was immediately branded "patently false" by Stephen Hart, a spokesman for Mr. Bush.

Admiral Turner told the news agency that he had General Noriega, then head of Panamanian military intelligence, removed from the CIA's payroll in 1977, the first year of the Carter administration.

"He was an unscrupulous character. He was spying on us. He was not the kind of character we should be relying on," he was quoted as saying.

Admiral Turner said that Mr. Bush, after taking office as vice president in 1981, "met with Noriega and put him back on the payroll" as an intelligence source, UPI reported. He declined to say how he knew that to be true but said, "I can tell you I am very confident of that."

UPI reported that Admiral Turner spoke out in response to Mr. Bush's assertion in Sunday's presidential debate that seven administrations had been dealing with General Noriega.

Mr. Hart, while declining to comment on CIA activities, flatly denied that Mr. Bush met with General Noriega in 1981.

An intelligence source knowledgeable about the U.S. relationship with General Noriega said that as vice president, Mr. Bush could not have ordered William J. Casey, then the CIA director, to put anyone on the CIA payroll, particularly given Mr. Casey's close relationship with President Reagan.

"As vice president of the U.S., he can't do that, and he particularly can't do it with Bill Casey" as CIA director, he said.

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____
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However, the source said that General Noriega's intelligence service may have been enlisted, and paid, to help in a U.S. operation, and that the money could have ended up in General Noriega's pocket.

"My best judgment is that Bush would not have been instrumental" in that kind of operational decision, he said, but "could have given a strong suggestion."